

## STAFF MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 13, 2014

TO: Planning and Economic Development Committee

VIA: Cathy Ball, Executive Director of Planning and Multimodal Transportation.

FROM: Stacy Merten, Director of Historic Resources

SUBJECT: Historic Preservation Master Plan

As reported earlier this year, The Historic Resources Commission (HRC) has been working since the fall of 2013 with Heritage Strategies to develop a historic preservation master plan for the Asheville Buncombe region. Although the HRC currently has a successful preservation program that has been in place since 1979, the commission wanted to further historic preservation efforts as supported through the city's adopted comprehensive and downtown master plans, and ensure that historic preservation remains integral to the strategic planning vision of Asheville and Buncombe County.

The work of Heritage Strategies has been guided by an advisory committee chaired by Brendan Ross, who is also the current chair of the HRC. The advisory committee includes a diversity of interests with representation from Buncombe County, the Asheville business community, Asheville neighborhoods, the Preservation Society and the HRC. The community was further engaged through a series of public meetings, focus groups and individual interviews to gather information for development of the plan. Consequently, we are excited to present this draft document to you for further review and comment.

The following goals were identified early in the process and all subsequent strategies outlined in the plan are intended to facilitate these four overarching goals.

- Heighten public appreciation of Asheville and Buncombe County's heritage and historic resources.
- Ensure that public sector initiatives and actions are models for best practices in the preservation and treatment of historic resources.
- Support private initiative as a major way through which historic resources are recognized, preserved, and enhanced.
- Enlist historic preservation in the quest for great 21st century growth – make historic preservation central to Asheville and Buncombe County's understanding of the ways and means of achieving a high quality of life and economic and environmental sustainability.

I have attached the Plan's Executive Summary and you will receive the latest draft of the Master Plan via a follow-up email. Because the consultant's work must be completed by August 22, 2104, per the grant contract with the NC State Historic Preservation Office, it is crucial that we

receive your valuable input at this stage of the process so that your thoughts and comments can be incorporated into the final draft of the plan.

The Historic Resources Commission, the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Downtown Commission have all reviewed the document and been given the opportunity to comment. The Downtown Commission, while generally supportive of the Plan, has asked that staff set some time aside at their upcoming retreat to discuss the details of the implementation strategies and fine tune the Plan as necessary. Staff will reconvene the Advisory Committee at the conclusion of the grant contract to develop a schedule for taking the Plan forward for final recommendation and acceptance by the Asheville City Council and Buncombe County Board of Commissioners. It is staff's recommendation that the final draft circulate once more through the HRC, Planning & Zoning Commission, Downtown Commission and PED Committee for a recommendation to City Council later in the year.